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Reports

- [Item#1](#)
China's Incomplete Military Transformation. RAND Corporation. Michael S. Chase et al. February 13, 2015.

This report seeks to answer a number of important questions regarding the state of China's armed forces. What have been the overall scope and scale of People's Liberation Army (PLA) modernization since the mid-1990s, and what is its likely trajectory through 2025? What are the missions Beijing has assigned to the PLA? What are the weaknesses in the PLA's organization and human capital? What are the weaknesses in the PLA's combat capabilities in the land, air, maritime, space, and electromagnetic domains? What are the weaknesses in China's defense industry? The authors found that the PLA is keenly aware of its many weaknesses and is vigorously striving to correct them.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

[Full Text](#) [PDF format, 201 pages, 1.1 MB].

Item#2

The "Islamic State" Crisis and U.S. Policy. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Kenneth Katzman et al. February 11, 2015.

The Islamic State (IS, aka the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL/ISIS) is a transnational Sunni Islamist insurgent and terrorist group that has expanded its control over areas of parts of Iraq and Syria since 2013, threatening the wider region. There is debate over the degree to which the Islamic State organization might represent a direct terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland or to U.S. facilities and personnel in the region.

[Full Text](#) [PDF format, 42 pages, 1.08 MB].

Item#3

New Ceasefire Points Toward Frozen Conflict in Ukraine. YaleGlobal. David R. Cameron. February 12, 2015.

A ceasefire in the fighting for eastern Ukraine was announced after leaders of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine met in Minsk. But a ceasefire alone may not produce a comprehensive settlement or an enduring peace, warns the author. "That requires resolution of the underlying, and possibly intractable, dispute over the constitutional form of the Ukrainian state." Russia is shrugging off sanctions and international condemnation. The strategy of intervention, described in Russia as delivering protections for pro-Russian enclaves in bordering states, has been successful in disrupting former Soviet satellite states' full embrace of European trade or ties with NATO. The ceasefire may end the brutal fighting, and could also chill democratic pursuits and self-determination for nations that are geographically near Russia but which hold higher aspirations than pleasing a bully next door.

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[Full Text](#) [HTML format, various paging].

Item#4

Preserving Ukraine's Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression: What the United States and NATO Must Do. Brookings Institution. Steven Pifer et al. February 2015.

The report argues for greater U.S. leadership in ending the conflict in Ukraine and Russian involvement in the region. The report, authored by eight former senior U.S. diplomatic and military officials, urges the United States and NATO to bolster Ukraine's defense and deter further Russian aggression by providing military assistance to Ukraine, including lethal defensive assistance.

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[Full Text](#) PDF format, 17 pages, 418.97 KB].

Item#5

The Days After a Deal with Iran: Congress's Role in Implementing a Nuclear Agreement. RAND Corporation. Larry Hanauer. February 2, 2015.

The president has extensive authority under the law to provide sanctions relief to Iran as part of a comprehensive nuclear agreement. Nevertheless, Congress can take a range of steps to facilitate, hinder, or even block the executive branch's efforts to relieve economic sanctions. It is therefore important to understand Congress' options for shaping the implementation of a nuclear agreement with Iran and to assess the likelihood and impacts of each.

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[Full Text](#) [PDF format, 37 pages, 414.21 KB].

Item#6

Four Years After, Tunisia Remains the Arab Spring's Lone Success Story. YaleGlobal. Chris Miller. February 5, 2015.

The wave of protests that swept through the Middle East in 2011, known as the Arab Spring, rocked governments and ended a handful of dictatorships. "All of the revolts of 2011, except for Tunisia's, have ended in tragedy," notes Chris Miller. "The uprisings were quickly sullied by a region-wide clash between the Muslim Brotherhood and autocratic governments." Domestic elites and alarmed leaders in neighboring states like Saudi Arabia and the UAE targeted the Brotherhood, a locus for opposition politics, while Qatar supported the group. A military coup overturned the democratic choice in Egypt; civil war rages in Libya and Syria. Miller concludes: "The recipes of Tunisia's relative success seem straightforward: limit outsiders' meddling, avoid sectarian politics and encourage all sides to compromise."

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[Full Text](#) [HTML format, various paging].

Item#7

Alienated Muslim Youth Seek Purpose, Thrills in Joining Jihad. YaleGlobal. Joji Sakurai. Februar 19, 2015.

Adolescents grapple to find an identity during a stage of human development described by psychologist Erik Erikson. Those who don't succeed in feeling good about their role in society blame others and may hold a grudge against their community. They also make ideal targets for recruiters of criminal and extremist groups. "Religious fervor rarely has much to do with what draws people to join such groups,"

writes Sakurai. “Deep down, it’s about purpose. Belonging. Excitement. A sense of identity. Order amid disorder. A focus for pent-up rage.” Recruiters offer an easy solution to life’s problems, with rewards and power, money and cars, or life after death. Too many marginalized youth lack the social or critical thinking skills to analyze the message, ponder the consequences and walk away – and instead, embrace a last-ditch effort to escape a futile, boring life.

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[Full Text](#) [HTML format, various paging].

Item#8

Sweden’s Foreign Minister Explains Feminist Foreign Policy. U.S. Institute of Peace. James Rupert. February 9, 2015.

When Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström announced last year that her government would pursue a “feminist foreign policy,” the idea “met with considerable derision,” she says. “We call it the giggling factor.” And where the response was not quiet laughter, it was often confusion, including in Washington. “No one knows what this means” for Sweden’s approach to conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war, a Foreign Policy headline declared in December. Wallström filled a hall at USIP to explain. A feminist foreign policy seeks the same goals as any visionary foreign policy: peace, justice, human rights and human development, she said.

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[Full Text](#) [HTML format, various paging].

Item#9

China’s Growing Demand for Agricultural Imports. Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Fred Gale et al. February 19, 2015.

The report examines China’s recent emergence as a major agricultural importer, analyzes U.S.-China trade patterns, summarizes projections of future imports, and discusses how Chinese officials are adjusting their strategic approach to agricultural trade as imports grow.

[Report Summary](#) [PDF format, 2 pages, 182 KB].

[Full Report](#) [PDF format, 39 pages, 3,167 KB].

Item#10

Economic Interests Attract China to Russia, Not Edgy Policies. YaleGlobal. Wang Yiwei. February 3, 2015.

With its invasion of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine, Russia invited condemnation and sanctions from the West and had little choice but to tighten ties with China. Stronger Sino-Russian relations prompt some analysts to compare China and Russia. “China should take such questions and comparisons seriously – making it clear through public diplomacy that the country is not like Russia,” argues Wang Yiwei. Wang lists three ways China differs from Russia: a cultural conditioning that emphasizes history and culture rather than geographic expansion; diverse trade partners including many in the West; and a history of settling land-border disputes through negotiations. By pursuing a non-alliance policy, China will keep Russia close but not too close, as most Chinese look to partnerships with

the West. China values good relations with Russia for bargain energy deals and broad initiatives like the modern-day Silk Road, and not confrontations that attract trade sanctions.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

[Full Text](#) [HTML format, various paging].

Item#11

Investigative Journalists and Digital Security. Pew Research Center: Journalism & Media. Jesse Holcomb et al. February 5, 2015.

About two-thirds of investigative journalists surveyed (64%) believe that the U.S. government has probably collected data about their phone calls, emails or online communications, and eight-in-ten believe that being a journalist increases the likelihood that their data will be collected. Those who report on national security, foreign affairs or the federal government are particularly likely to believe the government has already collected data about their electronic communications (71% say this is the case), according to the survey.

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[Full Text](#) [PDF format, 18 pages, 371.08 KB].

Item#12

The Rise of a Global Middle Class: Global Societal Trends to 2030. RAND Corporation. Samuel Drabble et al. February 2015.

The report analyses the rise of a middle class beyond national boundaries, as well as issues of inequality. It notes that while inequality between countries is decreasing, within-country inequality is on the rise. The report also examines the extent to which this global middle class shares the same values.

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[Full Text](#) [PDF format, 63 pages, 1.1 MB].

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